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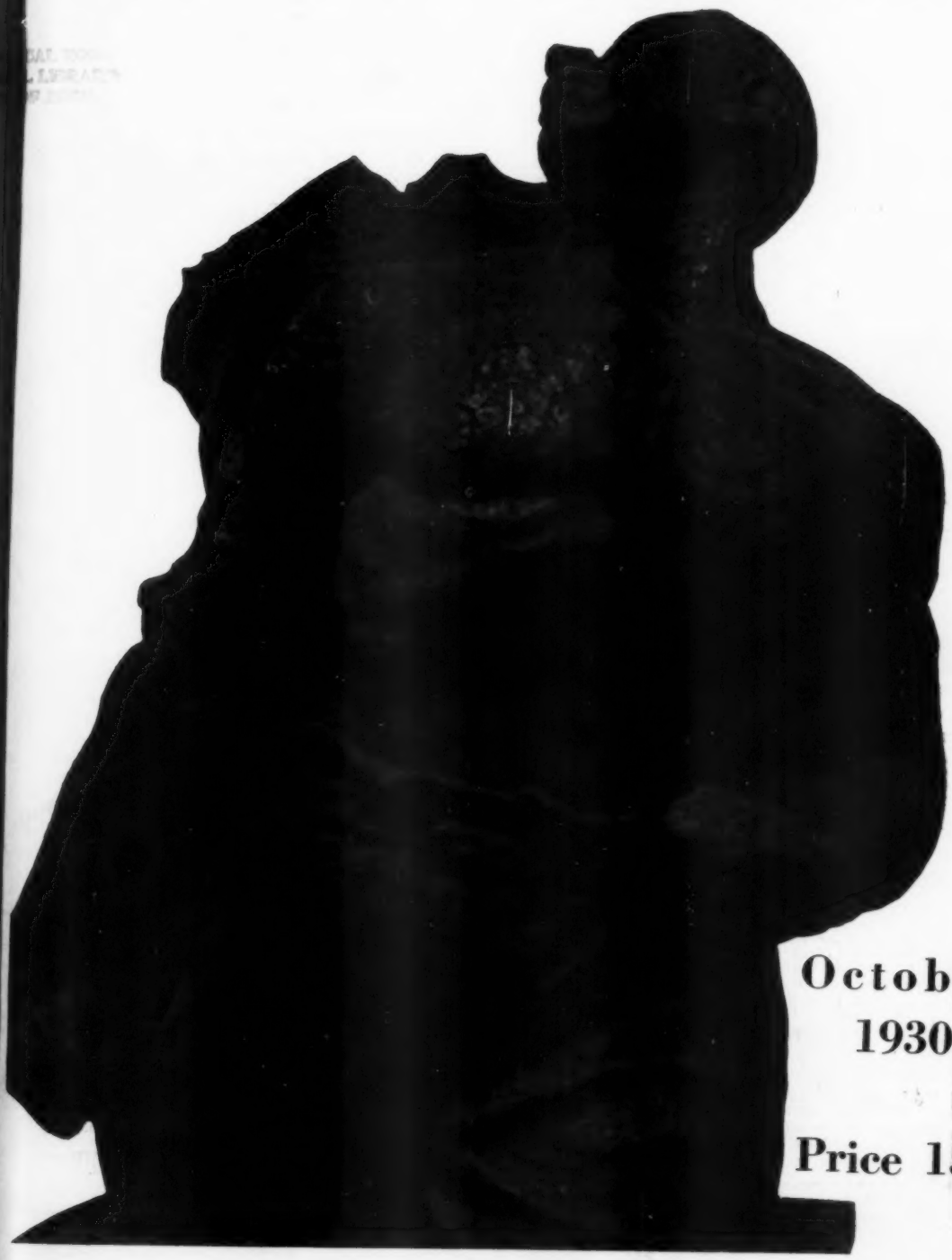
JOURNAL OF NEGRO LIFE



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EDITORIALS

Industrial Progress

IN this month's issue OPPORTUNITY publishes an article by Loren Miller entitled *The Negro Faces the Machine.* It is a critical appraisal of the major efforts which are being put forth to solve the Negroes' employment problems. Mr. Miller points out with great clarity the apparent weakness of each movement—the Urban League, the National Negro Business League, and the movement known as the Chicago Movement which comprehends the aggressive organization of the Negroes' purchasing power.

That there is no movement among Negroes completely adequate to solve the employment problem no one would have the hardihood to deny. And this is not strange, for unemployment is by no means either a racial or a national problem. It is a persistent and apparently inevitable accompaniment of the economic order, and up to the present day has baffled alike the statesman and the economist who have sought a solution for it.

In America the Negro suffers from low economic status. His advent into modern industry is of comparatively recent origin. For the most part he belongs to the unskilled group, which is by far the largest group of American workers. And it is impossible to separate the disabilities of the Negro worker from the disabilities of the millions of white workers who are unskilled, unorganized, and therefore underpaid. There is this difference, however: In addition to the barriers which skilled craftsmen erect to limit the supply of workers in order to maintain an adequate wage level, and which operate against other racial and national groups as well as the Negro, there is a widespread opinion on the part of employers that Negroes are incapable of doing those jobs requiring a high degree of skill. While in the minds of not a few Negroes there still lingers the vestige of a slave psychology which chains them to certain occupations on the lower levels and therefore inhibits their industrial advancement.

The industrial program of the National Urban League is not concerned primarily with placement of Negroes as Negroes, but the removal of traditional restrictions against Negroes as workers. It is educational in that it attempts to acquaint the employing group with the capabilities of the Negro on the one hand, and at the same time to disabuse the mind of the Negro from the acceptance of a fixed industrial status on the other. Nor is the Urban League unmindful of the methods and mission of organized labor. Wherever a policy of exclusion is based on race alone it strives to remove it, as the history of the American Federation of Labor and the Urban League will reveal.

Such a program cannot completely solve the problem of the industrial status of the Negro, which after all is determined by a multiplicity of forces inherent in the economic structure of the country. But without such a program, bad as conditions are they would be infinitely worse, and the penetration of the Negro into American industry would be indefinitely retarded.

Mary McLeod Bethune

OPINIONS may differ as to who really rules America. One may discard the list of former Ambassador Gerard as silly and inaccurate, or one may accept it and sadly confess that the voice of the people is "full of sound and fury which signifies nothing." In either event there is no immediate chance of settling the question which served to bring the former Ambassador again before the public eye and to furnish the daily press with a controversial issue. Of much greater importance is the question, who serves America? The other evening over the radio a list of fifty women who had achieved distinction in their different fields was read. The women were chosen by Miss Ida M. Tarbell. It was fitting that among these Miss Tarbell should

have selected a Negro woman, Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of the Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona, Florida.

Mary McLeod Bethune almost single-handed and alone created an educational institution for Negro youth. In the heart of Florida where at best race relations leave much to be desired, she has builded not only an institution of brick and stone but an institution of enduring ideals. She has won the respect of her fellow citizens white who could not withhold their admiration for her dauntless spirit. She has won the gratitude of her fellow citizens black who are keenly aware of the service she is rendering to the handicapped Negro boys and girls of Florida. Her services to the cause of better race relations entitle her to the esteem of the nation, and her place as one of the fifty greatest women of America is unchallenged and secure.

The Policy Holders

LIFE insurance has undoubtedly gripped the imagination of a formidable number of Negroes who see therein the possibility of the rapid accumulation of capital and the solution of the vexatious problem of employment for colored youth. Harry H. Pace ably presented this point of view to the readers of *Opportunity* in the September issue. But there is another side to life insurance, the side of the policy holder; and it is of no less importance from the standpoint of racial economy.

In the September issue of *The American Mercury* Abraham Epstein calls the great insurance companies of America to account in a revealing article entitled "The Insurance Racket." Mr. Epstein charges the insurance companies with using the payments of policy holders to sustain exorbitant management costs, and advocates State Social Insurance. His figures, to say the least, are impressive. Of the companies authorized to do business in the state of New York, which had a total of 72,000,000 industrial policies outstanding in 1928, only 952,809 totaling $209,913,564 matured, whereas 1,759,987 to the sum of $317,320,916 were surrendered and 5,802,441 valued at $1,594,472,261 were lapsed. "In other words" says Mr. Epstein, "for every dollar paid out to the insured at least eight dollars were actually lost by these, the poorest folk of the nation." Mr. Epstein quotes the New York Commission on Old Age Security as follows:

> These figures for good times suggest how precarious are the holdings of insurance by the wage-earners. . . . The amount of insurance which was terminated in 1927 was 211.9 per cent higher than in 1923. It is possible that some people are taking out insurance before they have estimated their ability to pay and only after they have begun to feel the pinch. . . . It must be further noted that not one of the years above mentioned was of acute distress. On the contrary, they have, except for brief intervals of reaction, been years of unusual economic advance. What the termination rate for industrial policies will be when periods of unemployment overtake a large number of the wage-earners is something which we cannot foretell.

In Mr. Pace's article in *Opportunity* he states that seventeen Negro companies in 1929 "issued 502,626 policies for a total of $87,069,019 and during the same period they had a lapse of 529,553 policies, totaling $84,139,827. In other words, 96 per cent of the Negroes who in 1929 took out policies in seventeen of the leading Negro insurance companies lost them. This is a distressing condition, a tremendous revelation of the insecurity under which the Negro wage-earner lives. But no less true of the white wage-earner, since according to the report of the Commission on Old Age Security the percentage of lapsed and surrendered policies in the state of New York increased from 81.8 per cent in 1923 to 88.3 per cent in 1927.

The Negro is poor. He belongs to the lowest paid group in America. He is discriminated against in employment, both industrial and commercial. Out of stern necessity has come the development of insurance by able and conscientious men who have sought to accumulate capital, provide equality in insurance protection and employment for their race. They are to be praised for courage and initiative. But the question must arise—What of the policy holder, black or white? It seems under the present system so far as actual protection is concerned, either private insurance must undergo some vital changes or State Social Insurance will be inevitable.

The Negro Faces the Machine

By Loren Miller

THE National Urban League reported some time ago that there were more than four hundred thousand unemployed Negroes in the country. Four hundred thousand jobless Negroes means that one out of fourteen colored workers seeking employment was unable to find it. Allowing for an upturn due to seasonal employment the figures are probably lower at this time but the ill has not been cured and there is every possibility that the condition will be worse next year. It would be the sheerest folly to lay the entire unemployment evil at the door of the machine but if technical advance has anything to do with it the subject ought to be of interest to a race fifty per cent of whose members are workers. There is testimony to the effect that the machine has played a large part: "Machinery did not inaugurate this phenomenon of unemployment but promoted it from a minor irritation to one of the chief plagues of mankind."

It is the purpose of the National Urban League to present through Opportunity *various viewpoints of the problems of race relations in America. This does not mean that the Urban League always subscribes to or endorses the sentiments expressed by its contributors.*
—The Editor.

The relation of the Negro to the machine and the unemployment consequent on its introduction is complicated by his status as a step-American and the ills attendant on that status; indeed he is so far removed from the scene of the first hand strife that it is not unusual to hear that it is no quarrel of his. However it is certain that the unemployment crisis has stimulated the spirit of racial antagonism and led to new friction between whites and blacks. The Communists have alarmed the country with their success in recruiting colored comrades by the simple formula of telling Negroes that the bosses are engaged in a vicious attempt to reduce them to a new slavery. Negroes, seeing their brothers forced out of life long positions, are saying that the black worker is being discriminated against solely on account of his color and that the Klan-minded are launching a drive to rob him of the last vestige of his rights. The latter conclusion has been supported by the fact that an ever increasing number of white workers have been invading job provinces that were the exclusive property of blacks in the past. If Negroes resent whites seeking their jobs, whites resent having to tramp the streets in desperation while colored men are at work. An extreme and illuminating example of this sort of feeling was revealed when a white Texan killed a colored Texan because "the Nigger had a job and I needed work."

Is it true that the "bosses" are fathering this strife in order to break up the solidarity of the working classes and have launched a gigantic program to pit white against black? Or is it but the manifestation of race prejudice whose sole object is to foreclose on the Negro? Perhaps the "bosses" and white Americans have themselves been caught in the net of a force that they can not stop and the machine is the chief culprit and instigator of racial strife! Maybe the real enemy of the Negro worker, if the term "enemy" may be employed, is the remorseless machine, antagonist of all workers regardless of color, and if its part can be diagnosed properly the way out of the perplexing predicament can be found. It will be well to see what the machine has done to the worker and what the worker has done to heal his wounds.

"A new phrase," says Stuart Chase "has appeared in the jargon of economics, technological unemployment—technological unemployment means an ever growing army—a displacement of workers faster than they can be reabsorbed into the other occupations." "Our use of power," says another authority "has grown three and three-quarters times faster than the growth in population—the survey seems to indicate that the time has come to devote continuing attention—to technological unemployment." Chase quotes Wesley Mitchell as estimating that the machine has had a major part in building up a reserve of 650,000 idle workers in seven years. That number is 250,000 more than the Urban League's estimate of Negro unemployed.

As the machines build up a greater and greater reserve of labor it is evident that those who would, in the ordinary course of events, engage in trades and occupations that require the use and tending of machines must find other

outlets for their productive capacity and seek other jobs. It is obvious that most of the men displaced or denied jobs by the advance of the technical arts are the white workers. They form the skilled class of the nation and they work at trades in which technical advance comes first; they feel the first blow of what Chase calls the iron bouncer. The shock of the machine's advance is secondary for the Negro; his turn comes when the men who have been bounced flood the streets looking for work. They must eat, sleep and care for families. A few years ago, faced with this same condition, they would have gone west, opened new territories and made fortunes. The west is gone now and they must take any kind of work they can find, even dirty "Negro" jobs. They do. Their plight and their color win the sympathies of the sub-bosses who are white and they are given the first call when there is work to be had. The Negro has faced the machine and the iron bouncer has put him on the street. Prejudice had nothing to do with it except as the scarcity of jobs dictated the employment of one of the more fortunate race, a condition that will always obtain where there is racial feeling. The Negro, confused by the fact that a white man has his job, suspects the Klan and goes to look for a "white man's job."

The black worker may be confused as to who or what is his enemy but he has been quick to institute reprisals against the white worker; while he uses every strategy to hold the jobs he has, he invades the provinces of the white laborer. Thrust and counter thrust is the order of the day between the races. One of the first of the Negro's excursions into the fields hitherto reserved for the white worker has been into the field of public and semi-public positions. The increased political activity of the Negro with its insistence on a proportionate division of jobs may be laid as much to the scarcity of jobs as to the absorption of the theory of democratic representation by the school trained Negro. Another measure has been that adopted by the Urban League in its worthy and fairly successful effort to capture jobs in the industrial fields where the white worker is at grips with the machine.

However, neither of these two moves has assumed the proportions of two other campaigns that are now in full swing. The first to be mentioned because it is the more spectacular is the attempt to capture white collar positions where clerks serve a large colored patronage. In the middle west this drive has been especially determined and the Chicago *Whip* claims to have secured more than three thousand positions for Negroes with its "don't-spend-your-money-where-you-can't work" program. Spurred on by the success of the *Whip* a number of other colored newspapers have taken up this drive and where it has been intelligently and forcefully directed it has proved a real boon. Although its originators have made no conscious attempt to limit it to white collar jobs the small retailers have been the ones forced to yield because they can be made to feel the effects of a boycott.

A more far-sighted and ultimately more important effort to remedy the desperate unemployment situation is that engineered by the National Negro Business League. Its plan has been to convince Negroes that they must concentrate their buying power behind Negro business men to the end that the Negro may "get into business." Its crowning achievement has been the formation of the Colored Merchants' Association and, in the words of its guiding spirit, Albon Holsey, the securing of a place on "Broadway where Negro business can hang its hat." The sponsors of this movement have stressed the ideal of large Negro business establishments to give the race a voice in the economic councils of the nation, but back of it all has been the hope that if Negroes patronize Negroes they will provide employment for other Negroes. Indeed it must propagandize to that effect if it is to gain the support of the masses.

This is a brief and rather incomplete resume of the Negro's effort to defeat the iron bouncer and place the men that have either directly or indirectly felt the ill results of technical advance. Each of the remedies suffers from serious defects that limits its permanent value. The drive for public jobs is handicapped by the fact that the supply is limited and white voters being in the majority will always get the best of them. The placing of Negroes in industrial positions is a commendable one but will not succeed as a racial move; if it pits the races against each other it will rebound to the disadvantage of the Negro. The Negro must enter the factory as a worker and not as a Negro if he is to stay there. Color must be subordinated to ability and it must be borne in mind that going into the factory does not destroy the possibility that tomorrow a machine may be invented to throw the Negro back into the streets. Its effect is to move the Negro into the front line trenches where he will feel the forward movement of the machine first hand.

The spectacular white collar drive is limited in scope and at best is but a palliative and not a remedy. White collar jobs are themselves menaced by the onrush of automats and mechanical selling devices. It would be irony,

indeed, if the Negro should triumph in this field only to find himself beaten by robots! At present the chances for advancement and the rate of pay are poor. Professor Kitson of Columbia is quoted as saying: "The white collar ideal is one of the most vicious in our civilization. . . . So far as actual opportunity goes the status of the man doing manual labor is better." The colored worker who wins one of these positions may improve his status for the moment but as a racial measure it has little to offer.

Collectively it may be urged against these last named three solutions for the Negro's unemployment plight that they evade the question that faces the worker as a whole, that of machine made unemployment. The term "displacement economics" might be used to describe them, they depend for their value on the displacing of white workers who in turn will displace other workers. The circle must in the end lead right back to the Negro as a race. They but postpone the time when the Negro must face the problem frankly and fairly for the displacement of whites by blacks or blacks by whites can not go on forever. The saturation point will be reached sooner or later and there must be a reckoning. Meanwhile discord between the races is bred in a wholesale manner and the position of the worker as a class is weakened.

The "go-into-business" program of the Business League does not suffer from this "displacement" objection. It is a step in the direction of the Negro economic bloc to which Carter of the *Opportunity* magazine called attention at the Springfield Conference of the N. A. A. C. P. As the editor showed there is a tendency to force the Negro to that extreme whether he wills it or not. There is an apparent economic fallacy in a segregated economy, however. Subjected to stress on two fronts its existence is a precarious one and under a capitalist economy it is parasitical. There is no example to prove that a group can divorce itself from a nation and live within itself as a self-sustaining unit. It feeds off itself and is doomed. Reuter says: "Segregated economy is obviously at the expense of the group that supports it." Negro workers caught up in a move of this sort would probably suffer from lower wages and inferior working conditions. At the expense of being tedious with the repetition it must be again observed that the machine would march on. There is a glimmer of hope here that the Negro business man might gain such experience as a segregated business man as would enable him to shift from the restricted field to the general one, a hope that is not encouraged by the history of Negro business. On the other hand, Negro business might make some real strides if it abandoned the traditional capitalism of America and ventured out in cooperative endeavor. But despite a few abortive efforts in that direction no real progress has been made there and it is doubtful if a submerged race can overcome the inertia of conservativism encouraged by the public schools.

Nowhere is the issue between the Negro worker and the machine clear cut. It is a shadowy, almost unreal thing identified only by a rising curve of unemployment and increased strife along the color line. There will be those to doubt its very existence. But an employee race can not afford to overlook anything that threatens the supply of jobs and there will come a time when the Negro must face social problems in their national significance. At present the white and black workers are locked in internecine strife. There is no attempt to face the future implications of bidding for jobs on the basis of color, a thing that will be ruinous to the Negro in the end. There must come a class consciousness to reach across the color line and impel the workers to face a common enemy. The solution of the problem depends on that.

It has to be said that the measures adopted by the Negro are the practical ones and that if each has its failures they are of such a nature that they compensate for each other in some manner. The ultimate problem remains. Perhaps by the time it becomes too acute social science will have reached the point where it will be able to remedy the condition. But now that the machine has reduced competition between the races from competition for different classes of work to a mad struggle for the same individual job, it would seem that the lesson of class unity ought to be driven home. Now as never before it ought to be apparent to white labor that it can not retain its aloof attitude, and to black labor that it can not evade social consequences of its bid for work. Both must face the technical arts with the knowledge that the machine does not discriminate. At least that bodes well for the elimination of race prejudice and ought to produce a social outlook unclouded by race antagonisms.

Cass Against God

By Henry B. Jones

CABIN lights glowed like waiting fireflies when Cass Saunders landed on Piney Island. Cass smiled in the darkness. In one of the cabins Birdie Mays waited for him he knew. Whenever he had been away Birdie had always been waiting when he returned, Birdie of the soft golden brown skin and strong rounded limbs. Soon he would gaze down into the black eyes which changed with each passing thought and kiss the lips, red and luscious as the strawberries of the spring. Cass Saunders required women as he did food, but he loved Birdie Mays. He stalked up the sandy beach humming "Twilight Boys" and swung the bag in which the precious gift for Birdie shook and clinked. A silver plated tea pot and sugar bowl would make Birdie the pride and envy of the whole island. Cass thundered with his great fist on the door of the first cabin he came to which showed a glowing window. The door opened slowly and an old Negro peered out into the darkness.

"Ain't I big and black enuf' to see, Uncle Pete?" chuckled Cass.

"Well I'll be dorg bited if it aint Cass Saunders! Come in boy come in! You sho come and go most scan'lous. Where you come from this time?" Uncle Pete closed the heavy plank door and grinned up at his nephew. Old Pete loved his big 'boy.' Cass and his love of life and adventure always brought back memories of his own youth. "Tell me Cass, where you bin this time?" Cass grasped his uncle by the shoulders and forced him into a chair.

"Been a whole year working on the lakes. Cold up there and the gals hunt money like bats after bugs at night. Made a lot of money fightin' in Chicago and round about."

"What, Cass? You got paid for fighting? Is they got another war on?"

"No. This was fightin' in a big buildin'. Just one man. I got so good, fights got scarce. Got plenty money in this old bag. Where's Aunt Maze?"

"Yo' aunt's done gone to church. I reckon most ever'body's down there, 'cept us men what's got work to do." Uncle Pete winked at Cass. He pointed to a shot gun he had been cleaning. "The rice birds are thick as flies and as plump and sassy as yo' aunt. Geetin' after 'em early in the mornin."

"Hot dam! It's good to be home! Old man, Cass'll be with you. Right now I'm on my way to see Birdie Mays."

"Why Birdie Mays—" began Uncle Pete and paused to scratch his head. No use spoiling the boy's first night home and besides that big buck nigger was ten wild cats when he let his devil loose. The old Negro looked up at the great muscled body standing before him. Those arms had broken a man. Uncle Pete grinned cheerfully. "Cass, yo' better trot over to the church. Birdie's sho to be there."

"Ain't nothing the matter with Birdie?" growled Cass suspiciously.

"Lord no!" piped Uncle Pete hastily. "She's puttier than ever."

"Well yo' started to say something and acted skeered. Thought she might be sick or gone away."

"No, no! Birdie's right on Piney Island yet. When I seed her this evening she looked right smart. Awful putty gal, Birdie."

"I'll be back. I'll go over to the church." Cass smiled at his uncle and strode from the cabin.

Sea wind and the smell of pine trees, the murmur of the surf on the rocks of distant Runaway Bay mingled with the whispers of the pines; an owl calling in the woods, rustlings of timid wild things in the underbrush; all these were notes in a song of home to Cass Saunders. He breathed in the air in satisfying lungfuls and thought of Birdie Mays and himself. The church was a few miles inland toward the hill and the walk through the woods and his thoughts made sweet music to shorten the time until Birdie was with him.

All he thought he uttered, chanted almost, in a whispered bass in harmony with the music of the night. Going to stay on Piney Island from then on. And marry Birdie Mays before next Sunday. Give all the fight money to Birdie and build a home. Build a home up beyond the hill where the old ocean washed the edge of the woodlot. Raise rice and cotton and a mess of eatin' stuff. Have to go away sometime and get a fight. Mighty good money for fighting way up in that cold Chicago. Never stay away so long again. Stay away from Birdie Mays too long she might listen to that molasses mouthed preacher, Isaac Pullen. That big wind bag was crazy about Birdie Mays. Pullen had better sense than to run after Cass Saunders' woman. Listen to old owl. "Sal cooks for my folks, who cooks for yo'all?" Good to hear old owl again. Yes, when he and Birdie Mays were married they would have three sons and a little girl just as pretty and golden as Birdie. Make the big boy a fighter, champion of the world. Bet

Cass could be a world champion if he stopped moving around the country so free. Make the second boy a farmer, big farmer, business farmer. Give him all that land yonder over the hill. Pay about two-three thousand for it. Four hundred acres in that farm. Get the money for it in one fight. White folks were sure crazy to pay all that money to a man for one fight. Heard about one boy who got ten thousand. Funny to get big money for something a man liked to do. Cass sure liked fighting but he loved Birdie Mays. And the littlest boy would be a doctor. Nigger doctors in Chicago were near as toney as the fighters. Had more sense too. Start the men on that house Monday. A real house for Birdie. No no-'count cabin for Birdie Mays. Wind was getting up. Lord could hear Ike Pullen shouting clear to the woods end. Light from the church looked good. Looked like little Sam Lucas standing in the door. Sure was Sam, waiting to go in after the plate had been passed. Sam hated to give away a cent. Cass would wake them up in there. Walk right up and and slap a ten dollar bill on the old table. Ike Pullen's eyes would pop out of his head. And at the wedding he would give old Ike twenty and kill him for good.

"Hello Sam Lucas!" laughed Cass. The little Negro standing in the doorway of the church jumped back into the door and then looked sharply into the darkness. Cass stepped to the door and flashed a superb set of teeth at the startled man. The lantern suspended from the top of the box-like vestibule shed its light on the tall bulk of Cass and little Sam Lucas recovered from his alarm. "Cass Saunders, yo' oughter stop scaring folks thata way. Yo' come and go like the devil. Yo' been away so long this time folks thought yo' was dead or in jail." Sam said tartly.

"Ease yo'self Sam. I didn't mean to scare yo'. Know if Birdie Mays is in the church?"

"Birdie Mays! Yes, she's inside. But she aint Birdie Mays. She's Birdie Pullen."

"Nigger yo' lying!" roared Cass. Little Sam Lucas was grasped by great hands and he found himself gazing into the blazing eyes of Cass Saunders. Cass held the man up, so the frightened eyes were level with his.

"Now Cass! Don't yo 'hurt me. I aint had nothing to do with it. Seems like Revenend Pullen talked Birdie around to believin' yo' had forgotten her. Cass! Cass! let me go."

Cass hurled the man out into the night and threw the inner door open. The little church was filled. Lanterns, hung along the rough timbered walls, showed every head but one turned to the door. One woman sat with bowed head on the front seat in front of the pulpit.

"Come into the house of God, Cass Saunders!" shouted the preacher. A woman murmured "Amen, Lord!" Then a stillness fell on the people. Outside the wind fretted and crept through the seams between the planks in the walls and fanned the lantern flames. Shadows leaped and shifted and stillness came over the place. Down the hard earth aisle strode Cass Saunders, a silent menace, his terrible eyes intent on the woman with the bowed head. Isaac Pullen stood in prayer, but fear stared at the man below him. Cass stood before the woman.

"Look up Birdie Mays!" the voice shook the little building like the deep notes of a pipe organ. Birdie raised a stricken face and the soft eyes pleaded with the fierce face of the man.

"Do you love him Birdie?" whispered Cass. The lips of the woman, full and tender trembled and were still. But it was enough. No sound from those sweet lips but they had formed a pitiful No. Cass turned to the pulpit like a striking snake. Pullen leaped backward and shouted to the death he saw advancing.

"Keep back, Cass Saunders! God is here and He will save us!"

What followed became legend on Piney Island. When an infrequent stranger visits the island he is told the story of that night and what it meant. When Isaac Pullen screamed at the terrible man before him, Cass brought naked fear into the place.

"God is here, yo' yellow devil! Your God! The God who let yo' steal my woman. If He's here, I'll fight Him and yo' for Birdie Mays! Come on God! Come on and fight. You are like that cotton mouth chinch bug there. Where's yo' old lightnin' and sudden death. Bring 'em all on against Cass! Yo' and him creep and do dirt behind a man's back. Come on God and save yo' lamb. God or Devil, yo' louse comes home to you tonight. Come on God!"

Cass Saunders sprang at Isaac Pullen. One strong hand tore away the preacher's coat. The man in utter terror, leaped behind the pine log which supported the ridge pole of the church. Cass reached behind it and seized Isaac by an arm. The few men in the place were advancing slowly to the aid of their pastor, very slowly, for each man knew the first to attack Cass Saunders would die. Women moaned and prayed. Some had rushed from the church screaming with terror. And through it all Birdie sat with bowed head.

Cass pulled at Isaac and inch by inch he pulled the frantic man from behind the log. The heavy support shook and swayed. With his free hand Cass pushed it away from him and it crashed over backwards against the wall. Now Isaac Pullen screamed and struggled like a wild thing but the giant Negro drew him closer and grasped the throat. He withheld pressure for a few seconds.

"Now's yo' chance to save him God! One squeeze and I breaks his neck! Come on God! Cass Saunders dares yo'!"

Then it happened. The unsupported ridge pole, free at that end of the building, crashed and fell across the head and shoulders of Cass Saunders. He sank slowly to the platform and stared up at the roof.

"God got him!" a woman screamed. Birdie flung herself across the prone figure but it made no sign. Her husband stumbled shakily to his feet. He tottered to the pulpit and called in a weak voice:

"God is still with us, sisters and brothers. We will sing 'In the Morning, Lord'!"

But Cass Saunders did not die. He could talk, haltingly, and that was all. Not a muscle of his body could he move. He was a great trouble to Aunt Maze and Uncle Pete, but the two cared for him and wondered what it meant, for the island was divided as to the meaning of this strange case. One group believed God had permitted Cass Saunders to live so that he might repent in just punishment. Others thought God was indeed merciful and that Cass had won a pardon in a manner of speaking, and a few felt that the battle was still on between the terrible man and God. Neighbors stopped calling on Uncle Pete and Aunt Maze, for the eyes of Cass Saunders haunted them. Birdie came to see Cass one night when the island folk were in church.

"Birdie Mays—does—yo' love—me?" had been Cass' first words. Birdie pushed back the corn shuck pillow beneath Cass' head and smiled at the hard eyes which seemed to look at her soul.

"Yo' such a bad man, Cass Saunders, fightin' with God. But I still loves yo'. I always will," she spoke, whispered rather.

"What made yo' marry with Isaac Pullen?"

"I was so lonesome every time yo' went away Cass, and Isaac is a home man and he is mighty good to me. Has yo' made peace with God yet?"

"Me and God—aint fit this thing out yet. Yo' going to be mine yet, Birdie Mays. Look! I can move my right han!" Cass pushed the big hand a few inches nearer the woman. "That's what I do all the long days, make this arm move some. When I get him to doin' what I tell him then I'll make all of me like I was before God hit me when I wasn't looking."

"O Cass! Cass don't say that. It scares me when yo' talk like that. God's watching yo'!" cried Birdie in distress.

"He's got a man to watch, even if he is well nigh ruint."

"I pray for yo' Cass Saunders, every day."

Cass grunted and closed his eyes. It was good to see Birdie, but he silently cursed God that she should see him helpless. A silence fell over the man and woman and presently Birdie left the cabin.

Spring always made Cass restless, but the third spring after his accident had a new interest to soothe him. At last the right arm did his bidding and was quick and strong, quite ready to finish the thing he planned. On a day when the smell of the magnolia blooms filled the little room where Cass lay and watched the amber clouds roll lazily past the open window, the time arrived.

"Reverend Pullen come to see yo' Cass!" Aunt Maze called fearfully, and when Cass turned his eyes he found the preacher standing beside the bed. Cass tried to hide his hate and excitement when he looked at the mild eyes in the face so expressive of peace and kindness. He waited for Pullen to speak. So intent was the helpless giant on his plan that he barely heard Isaac when he mentioned his mission, a message from Birdie. "Bend down, man, I can't hear you!" Cass said thickly.

Isaac Pullen leaned over Cass and the powerful right hand and arm circled the preacher's neck. The man was snatched down so violently that his head crashed on Cass' chin. A piercing pain stabbed Cass in the back of his neck, a jarring click somewhere in his head blinded him for an instant and then he roared out like a lion which has made a kill.

"I can move! I can move!" Cass arose awkwardly from the bed, still clasping the limp body of Isaac Pullen. How stiff he was and weak except in his right arm. Cass dropped Pullen to the floor and felt for his heart. He lived and Cass breathed more freely. No use killing the little devil now. Murder would be no help, so he shook the frail body until it moved. Birdie Mays would soon belong to Cass Saunders.

"Get up, Ike Pullen! Yo' aint dead! Look at me! That hard head of yo's cracked me on the chin and put me right on my feet, Yo' and yo' God figured Cass was beat. Yo' see me Ike Pullen. I aimed to kill yo' with this arm I been training all the long time I was in that

(*Continued on page* 316)

Some Reflections on the Negro in American Drama

By Randolph Edmonds

THERE is drama in Negro life. The truth of this statement is seldom contested, for everyone who knows intimately the complex existence of colored America, and is in any degree capable of analyzing the subtle soil upon which the art of the theatre grows, recognizes that fact, and is usually not hesitant about saying so. It is very evident that suffering, struggle, comedy, atmosphere, and great emotional crises—the very essence of the dramatic—are found abundantly in Negro life. Since this is true, the average observer has been puzzled at the slow progress made by the Negro in the dramatic art. He becomes still more mystified when he compares the advancement made in this field with that evidenced in poetry, music, the novel and the essay. The conclusion is almost inescapable that the so-called "Negro Renaissance" has been almost a total failure in so far as the development of the drama is concerned.

If one is seeking for excuses, he does not have to search long for an explanation for this retarded progress. The verdict of history decrees a long and arduous apprenticeship both in tradition and accomplishment for marked success in the art of the theatre. Then, too, its offerings are designed to appeal to a heterogeneous crowd which brings to the playhouse all kinds of opinions and prejudices which a playwright opposes at a great risk. The world wide opposition to some of the ideas in Ibsen's plays, and the violent demonstrations at the premieres of some of the Irish plays give an indication as to what happens when the playwright presents something that is a little out of the ordinary routine thinking of the average theatre audience. Until comparatively recent times, the narrow opinion of this "compact majority" decreed that serious drama was no fit vehicle for the Negro actor. The buffoon, farce comedians, and the clown who could sing blues, spirituals, and clog dance were the roles assigned to him with the minstrel show as the vehicle. Ernest Hogan, Black Patti, Williams and Walker, Whitney and Tutt and the other early pioneers deserve great credit for taking this kind of farce and caricature from burnt cork to the height they achieved in some of their musical shows.

Although Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Angelina Grimke, E. C. Williams, and others wrote plays before the tremendous interest in Negro material began, the Nordic writers, for the most part, have furnished the vehicles for the Negro actors. Although Edward Sheldon's "Nigger" was produced earlier, Ridgley Torrence is generally looked upon as the great pioneer who started the movement which has ended in the change of attitude towards the colored thespians. The Hapgood Players presented his three one-act plays: "Granny Maumee," "The Rider of Dreams," and "Simon the Cyrenian" in 1917. This was the first time that Broadway witnessed serious Negro plays performed by Negro actors. Following closely behind Torrence came Eugene O'Neill with "Emperor Jones" which established the Irish author as the most significant playwright in America, and Chas. Gilpin as the greatest Negro actor of the period. O'Neill wrote two other plays for the Negro theatre: "Dreamy Kid" and "All God's Chillun Got Wings."

Four other noteworthy plays of Negro life bring us down to the present. I refer to the starkly realistic play "In Abraham's Bosom," by Paul Green, which won the Pulitzer prize for 1926; the sensational "Lulu Belle" which showed the potentialities of the mass scene; "Porgy," by Dubose and Dorothy Heyward, a nearer approach to the folk play than the others; and lastly "The Green Pastures," the great Negro miracle play which won the Pulitzer prize for 1930. It is unanimously agreed that the latter is the best play dealing with Negro life that has ever been written, and is one of the most significant plays ever to be produced on Broadway.

These were the most important productions in the popularization of Negro dramatic material by the white playwrights. Historical accuracy would require a discussion of many others. Prominently among these would be "Earth," by Em Jo Basse, "Goat Alley," by Ernest Culbertson, "Goin' Home," by Ransom Rideout, and the work of the Carolina Playmakers. The three big movie specials "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Hearts of Dixie," and "Hallelujah" would come in for their share of evaluation. The net results of these and others, however, were to make the Negro a serious character in serious drama struggling for serious things.

From the standpoint of the Negro, as intim-

ated before, the great tragedy is that playwrights of color have had so little influence in shaping these plays. Only three Negro playwrights have had plays on Broadway for any length of time. Garland Anderson's "Appearances" does not deal with Negro material. The play contains far more white characters than Negro. "Meek Mose," by Frank Wilson, the star of "Porgy," had as its theme: "The meek shall inherit the earth." The bowing and scraping of the meek old man failed to excite a large number of Harlemites, and did not contain enough farce or melodrama to satisfy the satiated Broadway theatre-goers. "Harlem," by Wallace Thurman, who wrote in collaboration with William Jordan Rapp, aroused more interest and attention. It set out to do for Harlem what "Porgy" did for Catfish Row. It did not sparkle quite as brilliantly as the so-called folk play from the lower Carolina, but it did carry on quite effectively the dramatic effect of the mass scene introduced in "Lulu Belle" and carried to its height in "The Green Pastures." One of the most important things it did was to lift Negro characterization from a spineless creature of frustration to one having a backbone.

Turning from the plays themselves to the subject matter, we get a very dismal picture, indeed. Modern naturalistic drama has been often characterized as a "bloody slice of life," and nowhere is this term more befitting than in describing these plays of Negro life. In them we see dark portrayals of human misery silhouetted against a black sky-line of woes. They reveal earthly suffering at its blackest—men and women with skins of night struggling in the anguish and agony of situations that doom them to failure and despair from the very opening of the curtain.

Superstition and voodooism are especially rampant in this part of the theatric world. In one form or another they creep into nearly all of the plays. The intelligent and the city bred react to them in the same manner as the rustics. The entire theme of "Emperor Jones" is woven around the superstitions of Brutus, the usurper. Paul Green's "In Aunt Mahaley's Kitchen" and Ridgley Torrence's "Granny Maumee" have similar themes. Lulu Belle and Abraham have their share, and in one of the dark moments Cordelia, the highly sophisticated vampire in the play "Harlem" buys a love philter from a voodoo doctor. No wonder the average Negro is sceptical about plays that purport to reveal an authentic picture of his life.

I do not contend that the tragic side of life should not be depicted. My point is that it should be grounded in the natural laws of life, and tragedy should come as a result of the fitness or unfitness of a character to perform a task. This piling up of insurmountable obstacles with their overtones of inferiority is very unsatisfactory to those who see something deeper and finer and more dramatic in Negro life, and envisage in it a real contribution to the American theatre.

The noble exception to all of this, of course, is "The Green Pastures." Negroes who have never seen the play criticize it sharply. They cannot see how a fish fry could represent the Negro's idea of heaven when they have been told all their lives about pearly gates and golden stairs. God being black is something they have never heard, except as a humorous part of the Garvey movement. The Lord accepting a ten cent cigar seems to them the height of absurdity, and the spirituals are just those old slave songs sung for the benefit of white people. In short, they conclude that it is just another show making fun of the race. Very rarely are these comments heard after they have seen the spectacle, however. Somehow the spiritual message forces its way through the comedy, music, setting and the violent contrasts of its episodes. There comes a feeling, even among the harshest critics, that here is something beautiful and powerful acted by Negroes and told in Negro dialect, and of which they need not be ashamed. The whole seems a tremendous refutation of James Weldon Johnson's statement that dialect is an instrument with only two stops, comedy and pathos.

One would naturally expect Negro plays by Negro authors to reveal the soul of the black man, to give us something of the beauty and grandeur contained in "The Green Pastures"; but unfortunately this is not so. These plays are very hard to get, most of them existing largely in manuscript form; and since they have had no great influence in the popularization of Negro drama, they have not entered largely in the foregoing conclusions. Willis Richardson, Eulalie Spence, Georgia Douglass Johnson, John Matheus, Mae Miller, and Frank Wilson all won prizes in the *Crisis* and *Opportunity* contests, and with Wallace Thurman and Garland Anderson have established themselves as the leading playwrights of color. Most of them are known for their one-act plays, some of which have appeared in important collections and productions.

"The Plays of Negro Life," edited by Alaine Locke and Montgomery Gregory; "Plays and Pageants of Negro Life," edited by Willis

Richardson; the Negro play number of the *Carolina Magazine*, and the prize plays of the various contests give some indication of the kind and quality of Negro plays by Negro authors. As a whole they deal with the same subject matter, with the same type of characters as those of their Nordic contemporaries. Very little originality is manifested, and certainly there is no more piercing insight into the depth of Negro life indicated. Still further there is no catching the joyful and poetic side of life beyond the color line, no subtle suggestion of tragedy that rises in ominous overtones from black philosophy. Negro drama, as written by Negroes, is too stilted, too restrained, directly imitative of white authors, and as a rule inferior in craftsmanship with long literary speeches and almost no theatric values. There has been no riddle of the world given a solution in black terms; and after all this is the only thing that we can expect. For strictly speaking there is no such thing as Negro drama, Irish drama, French drama, and the like. Drama is a representation of universal life built around the feelings, thoughts, and clash of wills of particular people. When we speak of the drama of a nationality, we mean these universal truths colored by the temperament of a group. And certainly the reaction of Negroes to life should give us something that is distinctively different.

Now what is the best way of helping young colored authors to write the drama of their race? After all that is the most important question to consider, for it is comparatively easy to make a cursory summary of what has been accomplished so far, and point out the shortcomings with a learned affectation, and pronounce with oracular authority what should be done. To point out a simple, but effective way to remedy the situation is the thing most needed. What I have to propose is far from being original. It is based upon the obvious fact to the student of dramatic history that most of the great playwrights have been closely connected with the stage. The truth of this can be easily seen if we look for a moment at Aeschylus and the Greeks, Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and Ibsen and the Moderns. Most of them learned the playwright's craft by actually working in the theatre.

The colored schools of this country have seemingly not awakened to the educational and aesthetic values in the development of real university theatres, and have consequently done little to facilitate the writing of Negro plays. The Howard Players, under the direction of Professor Montgomery Gregory, made a very brilliant start in 1921, but the interest soon died out when he left. Other schools have given spasmodic productions of Negro plays but none have consistently tried to develop them. The exchange productions between Morgan College and Hampton Institute last year led to the formation of an intercollegiate dramatic circuit with the development of plays of Negro life as one of its aims. It is sincerely hoped that all of the schools will unite for the same purpose.

One of the greatest contributions to Negro education could be made by a donor who would specify that his gift be used for the erection of a small theatre and the teaching of educational dramatics. The net results can be readily foreseen. It would mean the teaching of the ethical and aesthetic values of the drama to larger and larger numbers of students which would in the course of years build up a larger audience among the masses for the better forms of recreational entertainment. The popular misconception that Negro plays are designed to hold the race up to ridicule would give way to the true aim of all of the best plays; the mirroring of all that is good and true and beautiful in a people for the enjoyment and edification of humanity. It would result in more authors writing on Negro life, and writing with such sincerity and truth that universal sorrows, sufferings, and joys might be revealed through the medium of black folk.

The Moment

By James A. S. McPeak

OH, I shall not be ardent when I'm dead:
I shall not greatly care or sadly sigh
If no one plant a laurel at my head
Or point my resting-place to passerby;
I shall not crave your glances or entreat
Your smiles and kisses, and I shall not hear
The melody of you divinely sweet,
Nor shall my dust awake to call you dear;
Only be patient: Grass will have its way;
The cold green things of earth will rise again
Above the mould of this exultant clay;
Nor sex nor rose nor moon shall matter then,—
But now your lips could break the spell of death
By crowding ages in a moment's breath.

Sinclair Jeter

By PEARL FISHER

WHEN the last war ended and people again settled down to normal pursuits, modern science came to the aid of those men who returned with maimed, mutilated bodies,—mute testimony of the orgy through which they had passed. Plastic surgery worked miracles in restoring disfigured faces. Artificial limbs were made, that, in appearance and function, so closely simulate the real, that the casual observer is never aware of the difference. Not only post-war conditions but the daily toll of accidents, contingent upon this age of machinery in which we live, bring about a need for skill in making artificial limbs. Scattered all over the country are factories doing a profitable business in this line yearly. But very few know that many of the concerns that do much advertising and soliciting, send their most particular jobs to the shop of a Negro workman.

Sinclair Jeter

This man is Sinclair Jeter. Far off the main road near Dover Plains, N. Y., in a little ramshackle shop that gives no clue as to the nature of the work done within, Mr. Jeter works daily at the trade that he learned more than forty years ago. About fifty odd years old, short, lean, brown, alert, with a ready smile and a willingness to talk about himself and his work, he gives one the impression of great reserves of energy and power.

He was brought up in New York City in what, in his boyhood, was very much the outskirts—Kingsbridge. His family was the only Negro family in that section, and their residence there antedated the Civil War. The old Jeter homestead still stands and is occupied by Mrs. Jeter, mother of Sinclair and widow of caterer Jeter who was Sinclair's father. Nearby are the homes of other Jeters who have married and remained in the same community. In fact one could conceive of the high terrace from whose height this old house views the encroaching city as being fittingly called Jeter Heights.

To this Kingsbridge section there came not many years after the Civil War Mr. C. A. Frees, a soldier and a splendid individual who had lost his leg in the war. His own handicap and the difficulties he encountered in procuring a well-fitting artificial limb induced him to embark upon the manufacture of such appliances. His venture was a huge success and today his devices and inventions are used not only by the house that he established and which still bears his name, but by many who copied his models and his ideas.

Mr. Frees developed a great fondness for the son of the neighborhood caterer and persuaded him to come into his shop to learn the growing trade, gaining great impetus at that time from the aftermath of the Civil War, and so began a friendship that lasted until Frees' death. The boy Sinclair and Mr. Frees worked together, year in year out, not merely as master and apprentice but more as father and son. In spite of the misgivings of white neighbors as to the advisability of training a Negro to do something (so they said) that he could never use as a means of livelihood, the two continued through many years what became virtually a partnership. New appliances were developed. New tools and machines were devised for the fast growing shop. In fact it would be difficult to say who originated many

of the ideas that were adopted—Frees or Jeter.

Then came the death of Mr. Frees. For a few years Mr. Jeter, against his own better judgment, entered a commercial venture in Richmond, Virginia, sponsoring a recreation center for Negroes. This proved a failure and Mr. Jeter returned to New York, determined, in spite of the warning of friends, both white and colored, to open a business for himself in the field in which he had worked so many years.

He came at last to Dover Plains, N. Y., about fifteen years ago, and taking over an old abandoned wagon shop began to work. His skill had already made him well-known to the trade so he immediately began to get orders. He does not advertise; he has no drummers on the road; yet he is never without orders for two or three months' work ahead of him.

Mr. Jeter personally selects all materials used in his shop. The longer pieces, such as arms and legs are made of willow. For these Mr. Jeter buys willow logs and seasons them sometimes for years, cutting them when needed. Many of these long willow logs are made into stock pieces for the large dealers. The smaller pieces such as feet, hands, fingers and joints are made of raw hide and other substances. Mr. Jeter works with the pride and joy in his work of the true artist and no piece leaves his workshop upon which he has not lavished his utmost skill and care. Some of these limbs are so intricately constructed that a man with two artificial legs can run, jump, play tennis, and engage in many activities usually thought of as impossible for people so handicapped.

Mr. Jeter often receives calls from many places to take orders for limbs from those who have heard of his work, or from persons who have recommended him. He has encountered many amusing incidents and he related the following with such a merry twinkle in his eye that one knows that he has risen to that high plane far above race or color consciousness. He was sent for by a wealthy contractor whose estate overlooked the Hudson. Mr. Jeter had been on other errands that day and, as he expressed it, he was not "dressed up." His ring was answered by the contractor's wife who took him in at a glance and said haughtily:

"What do you want?"

"I want to se Mr. A....."

"What do you want with him?" even more haughtily.

"I don't know what I want with him. He wants me. Here is my card."

"My God—a Nigger!" exclaimed the lady and nearly collapsed as she made the discovery that the famous limb maker and the little brown man standing before her were the same. Mr. Jeter got the order, however, and both the lady and her husband are now numbered among his best friends and advertisers.

Mr. Jeter chuckles over the story. "If I had known who they were I would have dressed up a bit so as not to give the lady such a shock," he said.

Another wealthy customer, a few years ago, was so pleased with a piece of work for which the charge was $250.00 that she sent Mr. Jeter a check for $1,500.00. And as you look about and shop and realize what a far cry it is from the old peg-leg of John Silver and Peter Stuyvesant to these devices that all but live, you know that, if the need were yours, Mr. Jeter's work would be worth all of that and more.

Sinclair Jeter has built his house in the woods, but the world—that world for whom he supplies a need—has already built a path to his door, proving again that Elbert Hubbard knew something about mouse-traps and men.

Winged Ones

By Grace Stone Coates

It will not save you to nest in a hidden
Place, tho no eye discern you anywhere.
The unmeaning sickle goes where it is driven;
Feet will trample, not knowing you are there.

It will not serve you to have beak and talons,
Do you no good that you are fierce and untamed;
Witless bars surrender to no challenge
That thru them both keeper and his bird are shamed.

Africa and the League of Nations

By PHILLIPS BRADLEY

IN last month's OPPORTUNITY the mandates system as applied to Africa was briefly described, with a view to indicating how, both directly and indirectly, it has influenced colonial administration toward a more humane and progressive policy throughout Africa. As the recent news from Geneva and London has reminded us, it is worth remembering that the system extends both to the ex-German islands in the South Pacific, as well as to Syria (under France) and Palestine (under Great Britain). The Mandates Commission has again shown in the case of Palestine that it is not afraid to investigate and, if need be, to censure actions of the mandatory powers that are not in accord with the "sacred trust" they have undertaken in the mandates.

This is the second of a series of articles on The League of Nations by Phillips Bradley of the Department of Political Science, Amherst College.

—THE EDITOR.

But the mandates system is only one of the ways in which the League has benefited Africa. For long centuries slave raids have been going on in different parts of the continent, and slavery itself has been legal in many colonial areas. Much as had been accomplished during the 19th century, both the trade and the institution have survived to the present. True, before the war there was a Slavery Treaty, but it had remained pretty much of a dead letter. The question of slavery was, however, raised at the Assembly of 1922, and an investigation ordered. By 1925 the terrible details of the traffic were revealed to the world in the League's report. It has now been signed and ratified by the colonial powers of Africa. Providing as it does for the immediate and complete suppression of the slave traffic, and the abolition of the practice of slavery in all the colonies as rapidly as possible, it means the end of this scourge of Africa in our own time. Already the treaty has had widespread effect; for example, 200,000 slaves were freed by the government of Sierra Leone on the first day of 1929.

An even more difficult problem is that of forced labor. Even though slavery may be formally abolished, what amounts to a disguised form of slavery may continue, if natives are forced to work for public authorities or private producers, without or even with pay, and with no adequate safeguards for their health, their families, or their right to return home. Here is a picture of an eyewitness to conditions in one African colony less than four years ago, even where the forced labor was under government supervision. "Not far from our shelter near the guards' camp we found a large band of children of both sexes, from nine to thirteen years of age, herded together in the cold night, by inadequate grass fires. . . . It was said that the children had been brought from their villages with ropes around their necks. They had been made to work for six days without wages and without food. Their villages were not far distant, and it was expected that their parents, brothers, and friends would bring food, but none had come, and it could not be helped." While these conditions in a forced labor camp are, happily, not typical, that they exist at all is a blot on our civilization.

The question of the abolition of forced labor is not, however, an easy one to solve. To insure success, the adherence of all the colonial powers must be secured. Three types of such labor exist: labor for purely communal purposes—sanitation, etc.; labor, generally paid, on public works or in times of emergency; work for private persons who are authorized to draft labor for their own purposes. After more than four years of effort by both the League and the International Labor Organization, a general treaty was approved at the annual conference of the latter last June (and thus open to ratification within a year by all states members of the League, including all the colonial powers), providing for the immediate abolition of forced labor for private persons and the more gradual abolition of such labor on public work. This, with the slavery treaty noted above, marks the culmination of over fifteen years of effort to establish a humane and enlightened native policy for Africa—a result which would not have come so quickly or so completely, indeed if at all, without the League's machinery to establish the principles and secure the consent of the various powers to such a policy. The recent Liberian Commission is an example of how this machinery

can be put in motion to clear up a particular situation.

But there are many other aspects of the League's work of importance to Africa. The Health Organization has studied sleeping sickness throughout the continent and is mobilizing the means for combatting it. Similarly, its work in studying malaria will be of immense value to the people of Africa. Again, the work of the International Labor Organization in improving and aiding in the enforcement of the standards of labor legislation may well prove one of the most effective means of preventing the worst evils of industrialization as it spreads into Africa.

While these direct activities of the League have proved richly beneficial to Africa, its indirect influence on colonial administration is hardly less significant. For instance, in setting up last year a development fund for colonial public works, the British Parliament provided that no loans should be made for works where forced or child labor was to be employed. This year the British government has again reiterated its policy of "trusteeship" for the natives by rejecting a proposed plan for a future self-governing dominion in East Africa, with a purely white electorate, and by specifically recognizing the paramount obligations of the mandate for Tanganyika in relation to proposals for creating a customs and political union which might affect it.

Another indirect influence of the League has been in providing the many individuals and private associations in all countries an internationally recognized and accepted platform to stand on and international machinery through which to work to secure its enforcement. Many of the representatives of these groups come to the Assembly and Council meetings and together wield considerable influence among the official delegates in seeing that negligence in relation to local conditions is brought to light. Thus the new machinery of the League, powerfully reinforced by a growing public opinion throughout the world (in no small part due to the effective work of these unofficial agencies), is today clearing the continent of its worst evils, and is charting the course toward a future when the African Negro will be recognized as the rightful proprietor of his own destiny.

Always I Shall Have Need of Lovely Things

By Marguerite Janvrin Adams

ALWAYS I shall have need of lovely things;
Earth's subtle beauty catches at my throat
When in the blurring dusk a wood thrush sings
Its tiny heart away on passion's note;
When winter sunsets over hillside creeping
Warm the cold soil where daffodils are sleeping.

Of lovely things I shall have constant need:
The blaze of city lights that etch the sky
With gold and silver glory; whirling speed
Of curving train that leaps and thunders by;
And the vast terraced buildings, row on row,
With shafts that trace the daylight's afterglow.

All beauteous things that earth has sent to me
I needs must cherish, lest their joy be brief:
Thus I would harbor memories furtively
Against the gathering years of unbelief,
And stand untouched by time and weary age
Upon the downward slope of pilgrimage!

What Price Jobs

By T. Arnold Hill

FRIENDLY methods having failed to secure employment, Negroes are now resorting to intimidation, boycott and threats. Fearing loss of business employers have capitulated and Negroes are working for companies whose officers once ignored correspondence and turned a deaf ear to interviews. Naturally this has occasioned much rejoicing among colored folk wherever word of it has gone. As a consequence this method of getting jobs is looked upon with favor by propagandists at work in all large northern cities.

Take the most recent happening in Chicago. Not the three months' boycott of three Woolworth Five and Ten Cent Stores, that has established a new endurance record for solidarity among Negroes, but the demonstration of a group of unemployed men objecting to their idleness as they watched white men lay tracks on a new car line to run through a thickly populated colored district. "We have been interviewing the company since May," says a despatch from the Urban League of Chicago, but no men were put to work until thirty were given employment the day following the demonstration.

In Atlanta the situation is reversed. There, through the medium of the newly organized "American Fascisti," whites are advocating the ejection of Negro job-holders to relieve unemployment. Their newspaper, *The Black Shirt*, is outspoken and caustic. The movement favors the policy of white workers only in businesses owned by whites just as Negroes hire only Negroes. It "favors sensible legislation and honest government by white people." It knows that "Negroes are sticking together and are organizing to patronize Negro-owned business in preference to the white merchant." It asks, "Why shouldn't we protect ourselves and our families by replacing the Negro help with the white unemployed?"

Cleveland hotels have refused wage demands of its union waiters and cooks. When the strike came more than 700 Negroes were hired in their places and policemen were put on duty in and about the hotels to protect them. The City Council, appealed to by representatives of the strikers, authorized the appointment of a committee to arbitrate to which the hotels objected on the ground that they cannot break their contracts with their colored employees. Again the race question in industry, as two of Cleveland's three colored councilmen were quick to point out in voicing disapproval of the resolution to arbitrate.

We see trouble ahead unless we check these antagonisms. Labor problems are always difficult to adjust, but add the race issue to them and you have complicated them to the point where only clear thinking and astute handling will bring us out. Mob psychology and vile epithets in newspapers make solution the more difficult. It is time that employers faced facts on this Negro employment problem. Negroes are growing in awareness of their increased intelligence and buying-power. They are no longer satisfied with the limited types of work thought "best" for them. They are congregating in our larger cities and adding to their numbers in the smaller ones.

Now all of this goes back to the thing that is fundamentally wrong with employment. It is a mistake to think that Negroes are the only ones that are suffering and that the ills which they face are abstract and peculiar to them. Whenever a Negro takes a job formerly held by a white person some one must walk the streets and vice versa. Whether the fault can be charged to over-production due to the use of machinery, to the lack of vision and system on the part of employers, to the failure of owners and the public to recognize the human factors in industry—or whatever the cause, the fact is we shall continue to have these industrial disturbances until employment is regularized and the work problems of men are correlated with the problems of living. We shall expect, of course, to see these inequalities accentuated among Negro workers. We shall expect to see the struggle between them and white workers continue until there is work enough for all who need it.

OUR BOOK SHELF

BLACK GENESIS

BLACK GENESIS. By Samuel Gaillard Stoney and Gertrude Mathews Shelby. The Macmillan Co. Illustrated and decorated by Martha Bensley Bruere. $5.00.

THESE authors are of a time honored company, belonging with Joel Chandler Harris, Ambrose Gonzales, Roark Bradford and Marc Connelly. It is not too easy to place their book. In spite of the advertisement, and the title which would imply a 'study of primitive Negro religion,' one doubts the universality of *Black Genesis* as such a study, even among the Gullah Negroes. It seems at times too ingenious, too 'well made' for that. The authors themselves deny any intention of being scientific, stating: "All the stories have *some* foundation of tradition. Several have been handed down for generations by family Negroes. *Two stand practically* as originally told." (Italics mine). The eleven stories probably fall somewhere between the more authentic Uncle Remus Tales and Jones' *Negro Myths From The Georgia Coast* and the amusing fabrications of Roark Bradford's *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun*. They do reveal, however, as with divergent excellencies, *God's Trombones* and *Green Pastures* reveal, the immense artistic fecundity of Negro folk life.

Though it could easily ride in on the waves of the popularity of *Green Pastures*, still *Black Genesis* has its own excellencies. It is chockful of bright and clear folk aphorisms. Gullah dialect is here, sufficiently accurate for the quibbling local colorist; and what is more important the essential qualities of the people are here. The stories bear witness to a humorous, shrewd, kindhearted folk; ingenious of idea and of idiom, able to entertain themselves simply and genuinely and therefore able to entertain others. Such South Carolina writers as Du Bose Heyward, E. C. L. Adams and Julia Peterkin have already done well by these folk in their portraits; they have done well by themselves in their choice of subjects.

In an interesting preliminary essay the authors discuss the family tree of Gullah folk speech and folk tales. Though all of their statements may not be undebatable, this essay is valuable, bringing into rather brief compass a quite readable summary of what philologians and anthropologists have had to say about the Negroes of the black border, *i.e.* the Carolina low country. These two authors, in their own rights are authorities; Mrs. Shelby having studied Negro life not only in South Carolina but also in the Antilles and in Dutch Guiana; Mr. Stoney having spent his boyhood on a plantation, and according to Du Bose Heyward, adding 'a knowledge of the dialect so perfect that he thinks in it, and so authoritative that he was recently selected by Columbia University to contribute a phonograph record of Gullah for their permanent collection of American dialect.' In spite of their close knowledge of the dialect, the authors have somewhat modified Gullah spelling and structure for the sake of clarity.

The stories tell us of the Creation of the World, and events shortly after, concerning themselves as should be expected, as much with animal life as with human. We learn how God created the world, how Adam and Eve fell from grace, how Cain found a wife and founded the race problem. We see the way the animals got their mouths and tails, and how the goodhearted Br' Dog, God's right hand man, caused the animals to break up into two types, the tame animals and the wild. *'Br' Alligator he t'ink a whole lot o' he looks';* and when Br' Dog is about to operate upon him in order to give him a mouth, Br' Alligator is so full of directions and so fidgety, that Br' Dog gave him the mouth that Gullah Negroes know a great deal about. So Br' Alligator, instigated by Sarpint who has forfeited his title, collects his disgruntled allies and takes to the wild, and Br' Dog and Br' Hoss and Br' Jackass and Br' Cow become 'yard chillen.'

We pick up curious bits of information, many of them delightful and some a bit too intricate. We learn why it isn't safe to go around Br' Jack Ass' haunches; why Br' Alligator has a horny hide; why Br' Guinea Fowl squalls "Come back! Fetch me back! Come back!"; 'what mek Br' Wasp so short patience'; and that 'Kind Heart gi' Sis Nanny Goat a short tail.'

This book, being a fusion of two mythologies, is therefore rich in characters, some familiar and long beloved, some new, but all cleverly individualized. We have the heart warming Br' Dog, and the sly and impudent Br' Rabbit. From Genesis we get God and his tall angel, Adam and his family, and Sarpint. The story best uniting the two casts is the last one, when Br' Rabbit seeks God at the Big House in order to beg a longer tail. God gives him three Herculean tasks to perform. Br' Rabbit with great cunning achieves these, and grinning all over his face, returns to the Big House. God has him wait under a pine tree, and then Bram! Bram! Bram! strikes the tree with a lightning bolt. *'Br' Rabbit tek he foot in he han' and trabble it jus' a peltin'. . . . God lean out de window, an' he holler "Ah-hah! Ah-hah! AH-HAH! You so smart, eh! You so drat smart! Well, GIT A LONG TAIL YO'SELF!"*

Though not so hilarious as *Ol' Man Adam and His Chillun* the tales have their own genial humor, and wise appreciation of human foibles. The animals (before they were given tails) drew up a council on how to get rid of insects. "Br' Hog git he chance right den. 'Waller in de sof' mud,' he exwise 'em, 'an dem debbils can't git t'rough de dirt to bite you.' 'Yeh, I'd radder been bit to deat' dan look like you does after dat!' say Br' Wolf.—"

The speech is picturesque and vigorous. After Eve's creation, "Adam git jus' as fat an' sassy as a barrow shoat jus' before hog-killin'." The folk telling these tales have thought about human affairs. "Out here you goin' to habs to sweat fo' you' bittle, an' dat will keep you' mind mo' on you' business."—"An' jus' like po' people bleege to do, Adam and Ebe habs to wheel

in an' hab chillen." Occasional bits show that these folk do have a love for the beauties of the land, and a poetic ability to describe them.

There are moments of great artistic beauty, such as God's reproving Br' Dog for losing his temper, and God's forgiving Adam and Eve. The stories show the talents of a born story teller. At least one story, the tragedy of The Second Sin, is a master piece of the art, with its characterization, easy flow, suspense and climax. "An' Adam jus' moaned, 'O Lord, both o' me sons is gone now.' And he t'rowed heself down on de ground by Ebe. God stan' by an' look at dem till de storm blowed away. An' den he lifted dem up an' comforted dem an told 'em, 'Bury yo' dead now, an' stop yo' mournin', 'cause I goin' to sen' a rain to help you out o' yo' trouble'."

The authors drag in references to Evolution, Fundamentalism, Henry Fairfield Osborne, and write mock heroic chapter headings, such as, "The result is auto-evolutionary, with a hint of beauty culture." The book-jacket reads, "Where else could our Darwinians find so neat an explanation of the catastrophic loss of homo sapiens' posterior plumage." To the reviewer this attempted humor is topheavy and strikingly incongruous. These stories go along easily enough of their own momentum. They need no outside aid. In this case it seems the aid becomes ballast. Finally, as a last minor cavil at a very interesting book: why must one attempt to make these tales a study of 'religion as conceived by the primitive Negro mind?' Why cannot they be received, as *Green Pastures* should be received, as the highly talented synthesis of an excellent myth making poet? Certainly these authors must realize that such poets do exist among the Gullah folk whom they know so well.

Sterling A. Brown.

Pioneering on Social Frontiers. By Graham Taylor. University of Chicago Press. $4.00.

TO America, the pioneer is the courageous traveler who treks into the wilderness to lay foundations for new communities. His exploits, his privations, his achievements have been related by thousands of authors of books, articles and poems. *Pioneering on Social Frontiers* is an auto-biography of a pioneer—a courageous traveler through the intricate paths of human thought, the deserts of human ignorance and the hazy maze of human conventions—laying the foundations here and there for institutions designed to minister more adequately to men's spiritual and physical needs, inaugurating new bases for better understanding of men's relations to each other, clearing the forests and entanglements of clashing ideas that society might provide a more wholesome atmosphere for men to live, work and play.

Graham Taylor, clergyman, social diagnostician, feature writer, publicist has presented in these 444 pages a most interesting, even thrilling, account of some of the many experiences that he has had with many leading world characters. Although it is in the main a story of his nearly forty years' life in Chicago, there are many side-lights on experiences elsewhere which show how universally his interest in mankind extended.

For instance, he describes his trop to Europe in 1914 for the purpose of attending an international Peace conference to which the Carnegie Peace Union had invited 300 men from all nations to meet at Constance, Germany. The day before his ship landed, a wireless message was posted on the ship's bulletin, "Austria declares war against Serbia"—and the peace conference ended with Mr. Taylor barred from Germany at the French boundary. He describes his visit to the Far East and the Near West, his conversations with Japanese naval and army officers and administrators, with Chinese political and social leaders, with Filipino nationalists.

His story opens with a description of the beginning of the "new Chicago"—the Chicago of the Columbian Exposition, the White City—which was the beginning of street paving and cleaning on a large scale, greater protection of public health and safe-guarding against fire. His own founding of the Chicago Commons—a beacon light for the poor people of a poor neighborhood and an encouragement and inspiration to many resident social workers who have caught his vision—is outlined modestly and yet effectively.

He has divided his book into five parts: *The Civic Front and Rear, In the Industrial Arena, Interracial Bonds and Breaches, The Social Settlement Movement* and *The Evolving Social Consciousness* so that it is easy for the reader to select portions of the story according to his own particular interest. To *Opportunity* readers, possibly the section on *Interracial Bonds and Breaches* would prove most enlightening. Along with the Italian, the Scandinavian, the Armenian, the Russian and the Polish populations, he describes his experiences in dealing with the problems growing out of large Negro migrations to Chicago. He has a chapter devoted to Chicago's race riots of 1919. At a meeting of citizens representing forty-eight social, civic, commercial, labor and church organizations, held at the Union League Club in Chicago, following the race riot, Mr. Taylor was one of the six delegates appointed to wait upon Governor Lowden to ask him to appoint an emergency committee to study the causes underlying the race riot.

The story of the founding by Mr. Taylor in 1903 of the Social Science Center for Practical Training in Philanthropy and Social Work is noteworthy in that this was the forerunner of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy—the first organized school of social work, since made the Graduate School of Social Administration of the University of Chicago. A debt of gratitude is due Mr. Taylor for this interesting account of a life well spent.

The beauty of his life and his unselfish devotion and loyalty to his fellows are disclosed in the final chapter by the following words:

"Faith in a democratic social order, trust in education to equip and guide it, and reliance upon a religious motive and hope for the outcome have interwoven the experiences narrated in this retrospect."

"Hopeful and zestful has been the experience in living life over again in the fellowship of the dear comrades whose lives and labor live so long after many of them have disappeared from sight and hearing. What they were and did continues so really to be and to do in

every outcome made possible by them that to think they cease to exist is incredible. Not only in the retrospect but in this present they seem too vital to have died."

—EUGENE KINCKLE JONES.

BLACK MANHATTAN, by James Weldon Johnson. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., $2.50.

In the realm of books, as in the realm of music or painting or sculpture, judgment must be based primarily on the degree in which the artist fulfils his purpose. Authentic criticism will always keep in mind the artist's intention, evaluating the material with which he works, analyzing his powers of discrimination, noting the skill with which he handles the tools of his craft in order to attain the objective which he himself has determined as the basis of his effort.

In the preface to his latest book, *Black Manhattan*, James Weldon Johnson says: "It has not been my intention to make this book in any strict sense a history. I have attempted only to etch in the background of the Negro in latter-day New York, to give a cut back in projecting a picture of Negro Harlem." Judging *Black Manhattan* by this frank statement in the preface, even the most exacting critic must acknowledge that Mr. Johnson has achieved his task magnificently.

Black Manhattan is an impressive, albeit spicy, narrative of the New York Negro from the time of the Dutch patroons in the early 17th century until the present day. It covers a period roughly of three hundred years, and of necessity must be sketchy in spots. In selecting his material Mr. Johnson has kept in mind present day Harlem as it is known throughout the world, and his book is largely devoted to tracing and interpreting the forces which have contributed to the universal repute which Harlem enjoys.

If there are those who feel that too much space has been devoted to the stars of the musical comedy stage, the comedians, the prize fighters ,the jockeys, the night clubs and night life, they would do well to remember, as Mr. Johnson suggests, that these laid the foundation for the present day vogue of Harlem and the universal eclat of this bit of Manhattan is largely their creation. Those swarming crowds of white folk who invest Harlem nightly seek entertainment, perhaps release from the pale, colorless vacuity of a white world that has forgotten almost how to laugh and how to sing and how to dance, if it ever knew. And these Negro minstrels and comedians breaking down color bars which exist in the world of the theatre even as they exist in the less romantic world of industry, paved the way not only for Florence Mills, but for Paul Robeson and Richard Harrison as well.

It cannot be truthfully said that Mr. Johnson is unmindful of other phases of Negro life. He knows better than most of the heroic and sometimes futile struggle of the Negro to survive. And he knows the great social movements which have been launched to win for the Negro a place in the body politic. Of these he writes with that moving intensity which characterized the sermons in his *God's Trombones*. And his analysis of the two wings of Negro thought, the schools of Dr. Booker T. Washington and Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, is as impartial as one would hope to find.

It would be expected that Mr. Johnson, who was closely identified with the development of Negro musical comedy, would narrate its history with enthusiasm. In this section he eschews the elegance of the formal essayist for the colloquial. And, if anything, he adds vividness to what might have become monotonous and tedious, and the reader profits thereby. But in his analysis of the Garvey movement his language attains rare beauty and power:

> *Garvey, practically exiled on an island in the Caribbean, becomes a somewhat tragic figure. There arises a slight analogy between him and that former and greater dreamer in empires, exiled on another island. But the heart of the tragedy is that to this man came an opportunity such as comes to few men, and he clutched greedily at the glitter and let the substance slip from his fingers.*

Stirring as is the panorama which Mr. Johnson unfolds, a pageant full of dramatic incident and colorful personalities, the remarkable thing about this book is its spirit. Here is no inferiority complex brooding over unrighted wrongs and inequalities, no wailing, no protest. All these things he observes with a tolerant cynicism that sometimes begets a subtle irony. But never is there bitterness, never despair. Instead, there is the calm serenity of a cultivated citizen of the world looking back over the fugitive years.

E. A. C.

WHO'S WHO

PHILLIPS BRADLEY is a professor in the Department of Political Science, Amherst College.

STERLING BROWN is a frequent contributor to OPPORTUNITY.

RANDOLPH EDMONDS is a Professor of English at Morgan College, Baltimore, Md. He is a graduate of Oberlin.

PEARL FISHER, a teacher in the New York Public Schools is of a literary family, her brother being Rudolph Fisher, the novelist.

T. ARNOLD HILL is the Director of Industrial Relations, National Urban League.

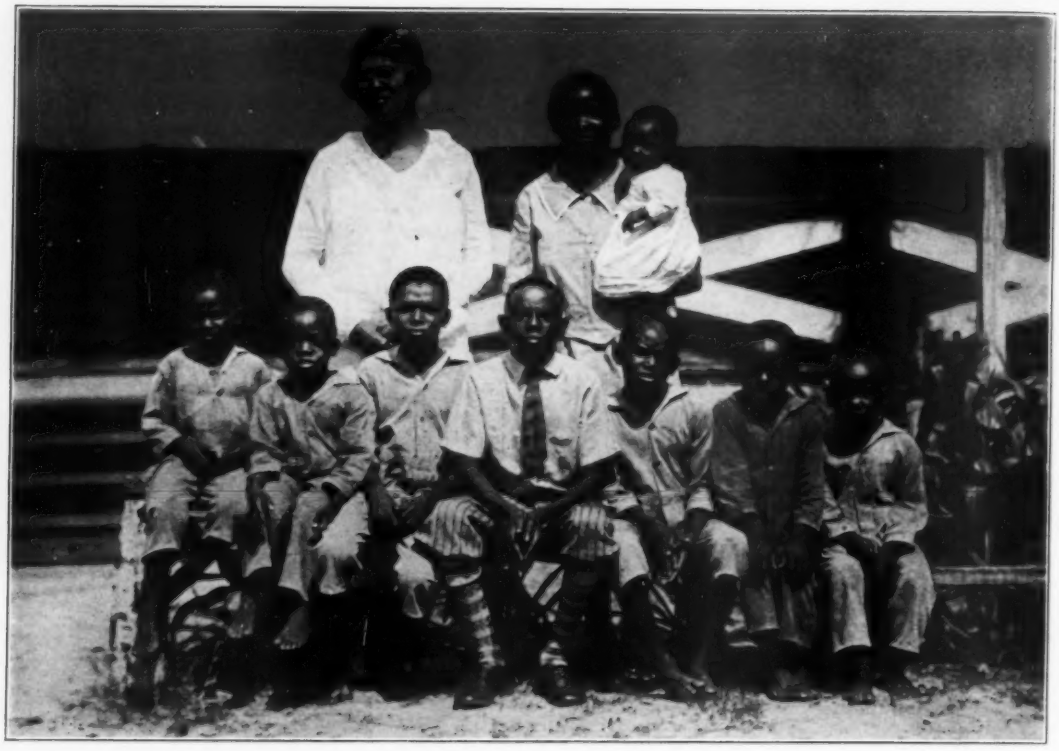
EUGENE KINCKLE JONES is Executive Secretary of the National Urban League.

HARRY B. JONES contributes frequently to the periodicals. His home is in Philadelphia.

LOREN MILLER is the Managing Director of the California News, Los Angeles, California.

JAMES A. S. McPEAK, GRACE STONE COATES, MARGUERITE JANVRIN ADAMS contribute to the poetry magazines.

SURVEY OF THE MONTH



Residents of White Memorial Home for Dependent Children, Tampa, Fla.

SOCIAL WORK

DURING the summer the New York Urban League converted its back yard into a modern playground, which was designed by Arthur C. Holden, Chairman of the Executive Board of the New York Urban League. The playground dedicated "Green Pastures" was equipped with miniature pool, sand pits, swings and showers and supervised by the Child Study Association in cooperation with the Board of Education. A play school was conducted by Mrs. Anna Rappaport, assisted by Miss Derosette Watson and Miss Carolyn Dublin.

* * *

Through the Case Work Committee of the Tampa Urban League, White Memorial Home—an institution for Dependent Colored Children—was opened in Tampa, Florida, recently. The home was made possible through the cooperative efforts of white and colored citizens of Tampa.

* * *

EDUCATION

DR. AMBROSE CALIVER, formerly Dean of Fisk University, has been appointed as a Specialist in Negro Education, a newly created position in the Bureau of Education of the Department of Interior. Dr. Caliver is a graduate of Knoxville College, and has studied at the University of Wisconsin and at Harvard. He was recently awarded a doctorate in education at Columbia University.

* * *

The first American Inter-racial Seminar has been formed by a representative group interested in race relations in the United States. The Seminar will meet in various cities in the South November 11-21. Professor Herbert A. Miller of Ohio State University is to be the Chairman of the Seminar and Hubert C. Herring, who has organized a number of similar seminars in Mexico, the Mediterranean countries and the far West, is the Executive Secretary.

* * *

Miss Estelle J. M. Felton has been awarded a scholarship offered by the Woman's Club of Albany, N. Y., through the Albany Inter-Racial Council for the high school graduate with the best scholastic record. She enters Myrtilla Minor Normal School, Washington, D. C., this fall.

* * *

MEDICINE

FOR the first time in the history of the Los Angeles County General Hospital, a colored physician Dr. Leonard Stovall, has been appointed to the Medical

staff. Dr. Stovall was educated in the public schools of Los Angeles and the medical department of the University of California.

* * *

IN THE MAGAZINES

GRANTED a certain amont of poverty, ignorance and overcrowding, and the color line in morals fades into nothing. In fact, if one compares the sex standards of the completely underprivileged of both races, as revealed in court, I believe (although there is not much to choose) that the Negro is somewhat superior to the white. From Negroes in Custody — by Eleanor Rowland Wembridge in the September *American Mercury*.

* * *

A recent survey in Indianapolis indicates that "some kind of musical instrument is in more Negro homes than in any other." From The Negro as Consumer by H. A. Haring in September *Advertising and Selling*.

* * *

Whatever may be the practical solution, it is still true that a complete segregation of the Negro in definite parts of the city, tends in itself to put him outside the immediate action of that imperceptible but powerful social control which influences the rest of the population. Those inherited resources of civilization which are embodied in custom and kindly intercourse, make more for social restraint than does legal enactment itself. From Education and the Current Event by Jane Addams—*The Survey Magazine*.

Estelle J. M. Felton

Children from The Green Pastures at the opening of the model playground of that name by the New York Urban League

CASS AGAINST GOD

(*Continued from page 302*)

dam bed. I knew sometime I'd get yo' in here. Listen yo' little devil. This is what yo' are going to do. Me and yo' are going to Birdie now. I'm weak, but I'll make it to yo' cabin. Yo' are leaving this island and Birdie today. Birdie belongs to me and always did."

Pullen waited while Cass dressed in clothes that were now too big for him. Cass watched him for fear he might run away but when the preacher made no attempt to go, Cass wondered how any man could be such a coward. This was the thing Birdie had had for a husband. "Come on!" growled Cass and led the way to the open.

Word flew from Negro to Negro that Cass Saunders was up and out walking with Reverend Pullen, two bits of news which caused every woman, child and man in the village to hurry and watch the strange pair. Some, overcome by curiosity, followed the men at a discreet distance. Cass was very tired when he and Pullen reached the preacher's cabin, but he entered it with a singing heart. The men found Birdie busy in the kitchen. She cried out when she saw them and when she noted the face of her husband she ran to him.

"What's the matter Ike? Did Cass Saunders try to kill you again?"

"He's still powerful strong Birdie. But we came along to see yo'. Cass' got something to say to yo' I reckon. He wants me—"

A baby's whimper from a corner of the kitchen made Cass stare at Birdie in consternation. Here was something he had not counted upon. A baby, Isaac Pullen and Birdie had a baby, and Uncle Pete and Aunt Maze had never mentioned that news to him. Well he would have to take the baby along with Birdie. He turned and faced Birdie and when he saw the look she exchanged with Isaac he felt suddenly very weary and very foolish. That look told him plainer than words that Birdie Mays had forgotten Cass Saunders in her heart. Dumbly he heard her speak.

"It's real nice of yo' to come to see me the first day yo' is out of bed. But don't come here no more. Don't try to kill my man Ike no more neither. Tryin' to murder my little baby's pappy. You oughter be 'shamed of yo' self Cass Saunders. Yo' go back and get in bed." She turned, smiling, to Isaac. "Honey, little Ike got his tooth through! He ain't frettin' now, no more."

Cass looked at Isaac as Birdie went over to the baby. Hate was gone from the giant's eyes and he had never been so tired in his life.

Cass against yo' and God! Yo' got Birdie. Yo' and God wins.

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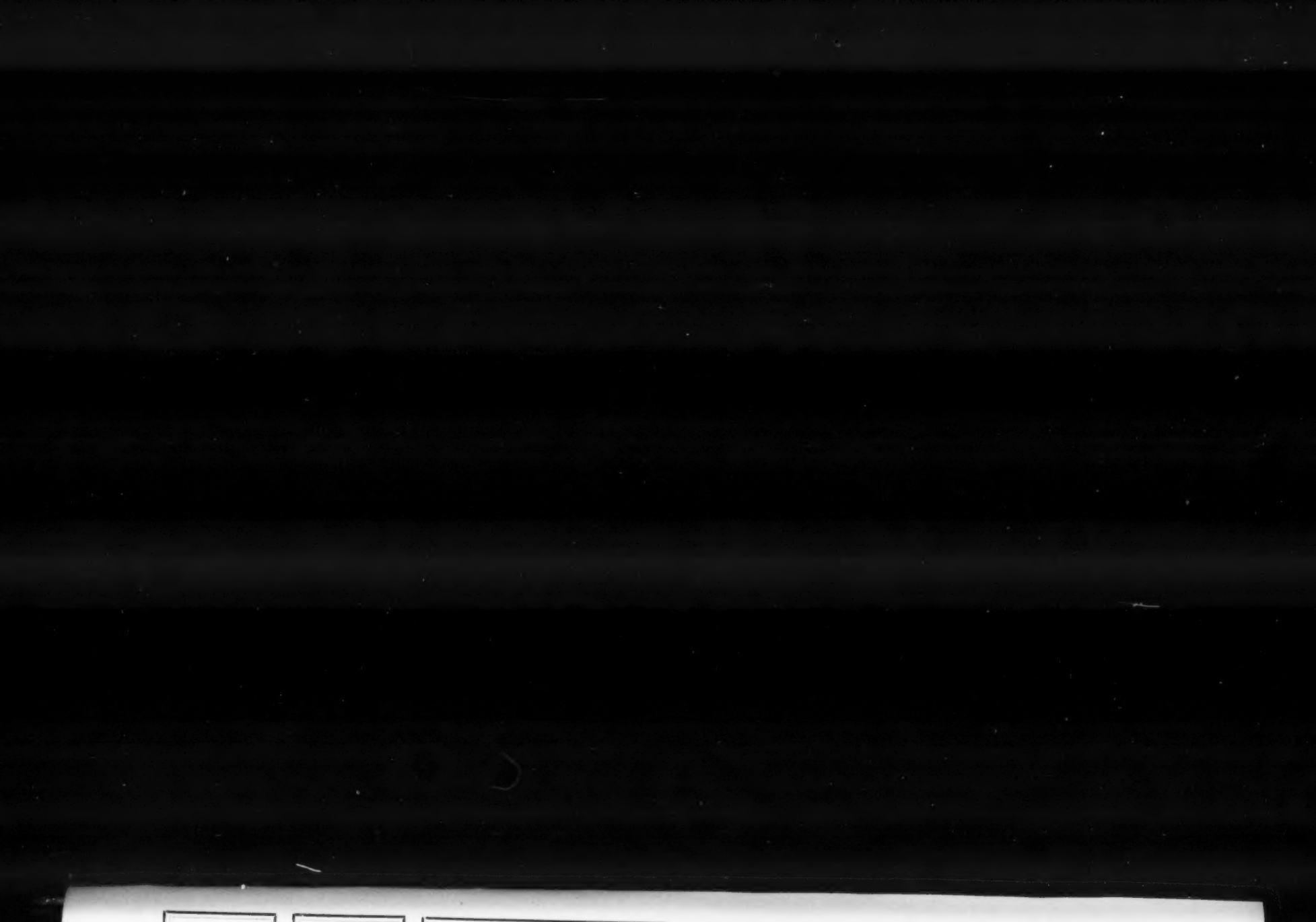
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